

## **Bullying and Suicide**

**Satellite Conference and Live Webcast  
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**Produced by the Alabama Department of Public Health  
Video Communications and Distance Learning Division**

## **Faculty**

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## **Suicide Among Young People**

- **Third leading cause of death ages 10-24**
- **Second leading cause of death ages 25-34**

## **Suicide Among Young People**

- **Typical 12 month period for high school students:**
  - **14% of high school students consider suicide**
  - **11% make plans to end their lives**
  - **6.3% actually attempt suicide**

– Data provided by CDC, 2010

## **Suicide Among Young People**

- **American College Health Association survey:**
  - **76% of students felt overwhelmed last year**
  - **22% were so depressed they could not function**

– ACHA, 2011

## **Those at Increased Risk**

- **Internalizing problems**
  - **Including withdrawal and anxiety or depression**
- **Low self-esteem**
- **Low assertiveness**
- **Aggressiveness in early childhood**
  - **May lead to rejection by peers and social isolation**

### **Those at Increased Risk**

- May appear “different” than the norm, whether in appearance, sexual orientation, or belief systems
- New students

### **Bullying . . . . How Many and How Often**

- Approximately 32% of students ages 12-18 report being bullied
- 21% say they are bullied 1-2 times per month
- 10% say they are bullied 1-2 times per week
- 7% indicate they are bullied daily

### **Bullying . . . . How Many and How Often**

- 9% report being physically injured as a result of bullying
- Both targets and aggressors are at a higher risk of suicide than their peers
- Children who are both targets and aggressors have the highest risk of suicide

### **Long-term Effects of Bullying**

- Research shows both female aggressors and female targets suffer depression, suicidal ideation, and may make suicide attempts
  - Frequent female aggressors may experience depression and suicidal ideation much later in life

### **Long-term Effects of Bullying**

- Male aggressors and male targets who frequently bully or are the targets of an aggressor suffer depression, suicidal ideation, and may make suicide attempts, although all male victims may attempt suicide

### **Long-term Effects of Bullying**

- Both male and female aggressor/targets are at-risk for severe depression and suicide attempts later in life

### **Cyberbullying**

- Willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices
  - Bullying through email, instant messaging, in a chat room, on a website or social network, or through digital messages sent to a cell phone

### **Cyberbullying**

- Occurs on social networking sites
  - Facebook
- Video-sharing websites
  - YouTube
- Text messaging via cell phone

### **Cyberbullying**

- In 3D virtual worlds and on social gaming sites
  - Habbo
- In newer interactive sites
  - Formspring, ChatRoulette

### **Why Cyberbullying Is Different**

- Targets of cyberbullying are at higher risk for depression and have higher levels of depression than victims of face-to-face bullies
- Targets sometimes do not know who the bully is or why they are being targeted

### **Why Cyberbullying Is Different**

- It is easier to be cruel from a distance because the aggressor doesn't have to see the response from the target
- Cyberbullying research varies for ages 12-18
  - About 20% of 11-18 year olds have been a target

### **Why Cyberbullying Is Different**

- About 20% of 11-18 year olds have been an aggressor
- About 10% of 11-18 year olds have been both
- 18% had been targeted in the last 2 months
- 11% had engaged in aggression in the last 2 months

– Based on children self-reporting through the use of technology Well Aware, 2002

### **Bullying and Suicide**

- **Suicide is complex and multi-faceted**
  - Represents the end result of a combination of factors in any individual
- **Children who die by suicide possess certain vulnerabilities and exhibit certain risk factors**

### **Bullying and Suicide**

- **Bullying may trigger a suicide attempt or completion, but evidence does not exist that it solely causes suicide**
- **Both targets and aggressors are at risk of suicidal ideation**
  - Usually the aggressor's risk is long-term

### **Concerns About the Film "Bully"**

- **Excellent new documentary now in theaters**
- **Powerful documentation of bullying in schools**
- **Aims to make our schools safe for all**

### **Concerns About the Film "Bully"**

- **American Foundation for Suicide Prevention**
  - Film suggests a direct causal relationship between bullying and suicide that is not supported by research
  - Disregarded the role of mental disorders present in 90% of all suicide deaths

### **Concerns About the Film "Bully"**

- Film portrays suicide as a normative and rational response to being bullied